



Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NewsNotes

A bi-monthly newsletter of information on international justice and peace issues

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| | |
|--|----|
| Peacebuilding and sustainable pathways to peace..... | 3 |
| Nuclear energy: Its dangers outweigh its benefits..... | 5 |
| Guatemala: Ríos Montt faces trial for abuses..... | 6 |
| Bolivia: Update on TIPNIS controversy..... | 7 |
| Honduras: Civil society decries mining law..... | 8 |
| El Salvador: Update on Pacific Rim case..... | 9 |
| South Sudan: Give government a fair chance..... | 10 |
| Kenya: Lent 2012, "Let light shine out of darkness"..... | 11 |
| Middle East: Mis-education in the U.S..... | 12 |
| Rio+20: Civilization must ensure sustainability..... | 13 |
| The financialization of nature..... | 15 |
| Trade: TransPacific Partnership raises concerns..... | 17 |
| Arms Trade Treaty: Politicians sign declaration..... | 18 |
| Resources..... | 19 |

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Peacebuilding and sustainable pathways to peace

For the past four years, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns has promoted “Sustainable Pathways to Peace and Inclusive Security” (SPPS; see box below) as one major areas of focus for our work. To illustrate some of the dimensions of this focus, we will include related articles in this and future NewsNotes. In this issue we examine different definitions of peacebuilding. Subsequent articles in NewsNotes will look at religious peacebuilding, Catholic peacebuilding, women and peacebuilding, the role of the United Nations and then some essential dimensions of work for sustainable peace and inclusive security, including the various intersections of peace and sustainability, and how they relate or not to developing insights into the challenge of peace.

The concept of peacebuilding is often used in a narrow sense to describe the specific and immediate work

of rebuilding a society following a period of violent conflict. At other times, it is applied more broadly to efforts toward the long term sustainability of peace in a given context through attention to structural change, transitional justice, healing and reconciliation, poverty alleviation, education, respect for human rights and so on.

The Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) defines peacebuilding broadly as does the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at Notre Dame. AfP talks about “the set of initiatives by diverse actors in government and civil society to address the root causes of violence and protect civilians before, during, and after violent conflict.” Peacebuilding is “multi-faceted and adapted to each conflict environment.”

The Kroc Institute describes “the creation and nurturing of constructive relationships — at every level of society — across ethnic, religious, class, and racial

Sustainable pathways to peace and inclusive global security

People around the world, as members of Earth Community, are interconnected as never before. Increasingly evident ecological crises will ultimately necessitate dramatic shifts in patterns of globalization, but our lives are inextricably tied together by electronic communications, the consequences of disease and lack of health care, malnutrition, inadequate education, the effects of climate change and extremist ideologies. The response of the United States, other governments and multilateral bodies to current political, economic, social and ecological crises has to take this interconnectedness into account, welcome it and build on its many positive possibilities. Placing greater emphasis on cooperative engagement toward just peace and inclusive global security rather than national security could encourage U.S. Americans to appreciate the diversity of gifts from other nations and cultures. The U.S. posture in our world should be cooperative and more trusting.

Trust is the opposite of fear. Fear sees potential enemies; trust sees potential friends and collaborators. Fear leads to greed and selfishness; trust empowers right relationships. Fear demands control; trust allows others freedom. Fear aspires to superiority; trust ensures that others have enough. Fear is preoccupied with one's lack; trust celebrates the gifts of others.

To the pursuit of just peace and inclusive global security, Maryknoll brings many useful lessons. Maryknoll missionaries have traditionally inculturated in communities abroad. They have learned to communicate through new languages and to appreciate new cultural experiences. They have seen extreme poverty and violence, but also have discovered new riches in honored relationships and respected traditions. Some have gone overseas with a zeal to produce and accomplish great things, and have adapted to different rhythms and simpler ways of life. They have brought with them U.S. American norms, and have bumped up against different but refreshing values. In short, they have discovered something that could help alleviate some of our greatest fears of “the other.”

Our pursuit of sustainable pathways to peace and inclusive security builds on this experience. We believe it is time to replace time-worn, discredited policies that emphasize U.S. national security over-against the well-being of the whole earth community with a new cooperative attitude and a commitment to promote what constitutes lasting peace and inclusive security for all.

boundaries.” “Peacebuilders,” they write, “seek the nonviolent and collaborative resolution of social inequities and the transformation of structural conditions that generate deadly conflict. The range of relationship-building activities encompasses the entire conflict cycle and includes conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution and transformation, and post-conflict reconciliation.” The Kroc Institute will publish a multi-volume book on strategic peacebuilding with Oxford University Press. The first volume of the *Oxford Studies of Strategic Peacebuilding*, edited by Scott Appleby, John Paul Lederach, and Daniel Philpott, was published in early 2010.

Heather Dubois, in the article “Religion and Peacebuilding” (Journal of Religion, Conflict and Peace, Spring 2008), writes that peacebuilding is “an enterprise that is more often described than defined. Perhaps this is because it is undertaken by a wide variety of actors whose strengths and capacities enable them to build peace in different ways.” She refers, among others, to Michael Pugh, who “traces peacebuilding practices back to the Cold War in the confidence building work of NGOs such as the Mennonite Central Committee, the Society of Friends, the movement for European Nuclear Disarmament, and the UK-based Centre for International Peacebuilding” and Johan Galtung, who “as early as the 1960s, began to describe peacebuilding as ‘the prac-

tical implementation of peaceful social change through socio-economic reconstruction and development.’”

University of Notre Dame Professor John Paul Lederach writes about peacebuilding as “a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships. The term thus involves a wide range of activities that both precede and follow formal peace accords.” (*Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1997)

Finally, the role of the UN Peacebuilding Commission is expansive, but largely limited to post-conflict situations. The commission is charged with (1) bringing together all of the relevant actors, including international donors, the international financial institutions, national governments, troop contributing countries; (2) marshaling resources and (3) advising on and proposing integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery and where appropriate, highlighting any gaps that threaten to undermine peace. Its partner organization, the UN Peacebuilding Fund, supports peacebuilding activities which directly contribute to post-conflict stabilization and strengthen the capacity of governments, national/local institutions and transitional or other relevant authorities.

Resource: The dance of Exodus in an age of growth

Inspired by the themes explored in the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns’ Faith Economy Ecology project, Tevyn East created Leaps and Bounds, a one-woman show that traveled the U.S. for two years. The show introduced audiences to Tevyn’s journey: how to live out her Christian values in an increasingly unsustainable society. It is a journey that acknowledges the personal transformation that must accompany constructive solutions to the converging energy, environmental, and economic crisis we face today. She explored Judeo-Christian scriptures and the ideas they provide to respond to these crises.

Her performance is now available on DVD, to inspire communities that have not been introduced to her witness. Reanimating the themes presented in live production, the film moves beyond the limits of theater and is shot in multiple locations. Layers of storytelling, song, dance, music and ritual are all set in new backdrops which are beautiful yet emblematic of our society’s disconnection with Earth. Tevyn clearly connects the earliest errors of human society to the dangerous principles that now drive economic growth, but ends with an expression of signs of change and deep hope for the future. David Korten, board chair of YES! magazine and author *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*, calls this video “[a]n uplifting work of beauty and insight with an inspiring message of hope and possibility.”

Go to The Affording Hope website at <http://www.affordinghopeproject.org/the-film/buy-dvd/> to order copies to share with family and members of your own faith community.



Nuclear energy: Its dangers outweigh its benefits

After visiting the Fukushima Daiichi disaster area in June 2011, Maryknoll Sister Kathleen Reiley wrote, "The Japanese have a saying – gambaro -- translated in English as: 'Let's hang in there and not give up!' However, the people who lost everything in the tsunami said, 'We can't do any more than we are doing now.'" In response to the March 2011 tragedy, and after many months of research, Maryknoll is releasing the following statement on the one year anniversary of the accident. Find this statement and additional background information on the Global Concerns' website.

Overwhelming scientific evidence points to carbon emissions from human activity as a primary factor in the changing climate that is threatening the survival of all living species in the biosphere. One proposed solution is increased development of so-called "clean and carbon free" nuclear energy. Taking seriously the imperative of reducing dependence on fossil fuels for the sake of future generations and of Earth herself, Maryknoll has gathered experience and reflected with great care on this proposal.

Our experience is deep and important: Maryknoll centers are located in Ossining, New York, less than eight miles from the Indian Point nuclear power plant. Hundreds of us, including many of our retired and elderly members, live there. Maryknoll sisters have lived and worked in New Mexico among uranium miners; and Maryknoll missionaries have lived in Japan long enough to witness the destructive capacity of nuclear technology in both the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the most recent Fukushima Daiichi accident.

Around the world Maryknoll missionaries have lived with the most impoverished and marginalized communities. In our reflection on this critical issue we are intensely cognizant of the importance of energy to improving the quality of life for those on our planet who are barely surviving. But we are convinced that other pathways to a genuine "good life" exist than one that is as fraught with danger and deception as that of nuclear power.

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns has scrutinized the link between nuclear energy and nuclear weapons focusing on the relative benefits and dangers of nuclear fuel to the whole earth community.

From our mission standpoint of promoting peace, social justice and the integrity of creation, we have examined the burden that nuclear energy use inflicts upon present and future generations and have identified multiple serious threats that begin with uranium mining, the front end of the nuclear energy cycle, and end with the problem of "spent fuel" disposal, the back end of the nuclear

fuel cycle. We believe that the radiation and proliferation hazards endemic to nuclear energy production breach the safety and security of human life and endanger the integrity of creation.

Careful examination of the most obvious dangers in each step in the nuclear production cycle and a serious reflection from an ethical point of view has confirmed that:

- The nuclear fuel cycle is a danger to public health and heavily pollutes the environment.
- The nuclear fuel cycle is unsafe because it produces large amounts of radioactive waste for which the world has not yet found a safe repository.
- During the mining, milling, transportation and enrichment processes in particular, workers and their families, most of them native peoples, are continuously exposed to radioactivity.
- Nuclear power and nuclear weapons are so closely linked that it is impossible to separate the two. Increased reliance on nuclear energy increases the likelihood of nuclear weapons proliferation.
- The nuclear fuel cycle, especially the enrichment stage, could be exploited by terrorist groups and unstable governments to produce dirty bombs or weapons of mass destruction.
- Depleted uranium, a dangerous by-product of the nuclear enrichment process, that enters the body through wounds, inhalation of airborne particles, or ingestion of residue, is deployed in weapons, exacerbating conflict and post-conflict dangers, especially for children.
- The U.S. government is heavily subsidizing the nuclear industry and by so doing, diverting funds that could be promoting development in the renewable energy sector.
- The goal of reducing carbon emissions to zero cannot be achieved through the use of nuclear energy because fossil fuels still play a major role in powering the nuclear fuel cycle.

Based on the Gospel, the tradition of Catholic social thought, and new insights into the inextricable dependence of humans on the long-term sustainability of the entire community of life, we believe that these threats far outweigh the benefits of using nuclear energy to mitigate global warming.

The survival of future generations, and perhaps our own, and a sustainable future for the whole community of life require that we dramatically reduce carbon emissions from human activity in the global North, through an unwavering shift to renewable sources of energy and an even more rigorous transformation of our lifestyles.

Guatemala: Ríos Montt faces trial for abuses

After nearly 30 years, Efraín Ríos Montt finally will face trial for genocide and crimes against humanity. Ríos Montt was Guatemala's president for 17 months during 1982 to 1983, when at least 1,771 people were killed, 1,445 raped and nearly 30,000 displaced, the bloodiest period of the country's brutal 36-year civil war.

Ríos Montt enjoyed immunity for years as a member of Congress, but on January 14 his 14-year term ended, and charges against him were allowed to proceed. Less than two weeks later, on January 26, a Guatemalan court determined that there is sufficient evidence to formally charge the former dictator. Prosecutors say they have proof that Ríos Montt directly participated in the implementation of a counterinsurgency plan that is linked to 72 separate incidences of human rights abuse. Judge Carol Patricia Flores' comments in her ruling were clear: "We can establish these are acts so degrading, so humiliating that there is no justification." She added, "You were the general commander of the military and had knowledge of the execution of these plans."

Flores' comments were controversial to some who offered them up as further proof of her bias against the defense: In November of last year, the defense lawyer for Hector Lopez Fuentes – a retired general and army chief of staff under Ríos Montt who is also charged in the case – filed a request that Flores step down. Just before a recent hearing to decide whether or not to drop the charges on Ríos Montt because of a 1986 amnesty agreement, Flores did recuse herself. Judge Miguel Angel Galvez postponed the hearing until March, but made clear that Flores' decisions will remain in place. Although Ríos Montt's lawyer complained that Flores had violated due process by charging Ríos Montt before hearing his testimony – ignoring the fact that the former president had been given the chance to respond and had refused – the lawyer had not filed a request to remove Flores from the case. It's likely that Ríos Montt's defense thought this was inevitable; it is not clear what influence, if any, the recusal will have.

The case against Ríos Montt rests heavily on proving chain-of-command, demonstrating that lower-level officers reported their actions to more senior officers (including Ríos Montt) who were indeed giving orders and condoning their tactics. Ríos Montt's defense is deviating from the successful method used by other former



Efraín Ríos Montt

army officers such as current President Otto Perez Molina. When accused of crimes against humanity and genocide, Perez Molina and others simply maintained that no massacres or genocide took place during the war. The defense claims that Ríos Montt was not on the battlefield and therefore did not have command responsibility – the human rights abuses were a result of renegade officers on the ground rather than official state policy.

Many see this as a risky move, particularly because it has never been tried in Guatemala before, and the prosecution has already introduced several pieces of evidence to contradict these claims. One is a clip from the film "Granito: How to nail a dictator," where

Ríos Montt explicitly assumes "command responsibility," stating, "If I can't control the Army, then what am I doing here?" An additional piece of evidence, Plan Sofia, is a collection of secret military documents and the official government record of the counterinsurgency operation, which describes how the chain of command functioned during the war. Two other such documents pertinent to the case, Plan Firmeza '83 and Plan Victoria '82, are classified. Members of the Military Archive Declassification Commission argue these papers do not contain information related to human rights violations and that they should remain secret due to current national security concerns.

The recent vote for President Perez Molina, who was a commander in the Ixil community in 1982-83, and the first former military commander elected to the presidency since democracy was restored in 1986, adds an interesting twist to the Ríos Montt case: It is hard to imagine the Ríos Montt case going forward without producing damning evidence against Perez Molina. Human rights activists feared the new president would interfere in or completely stop the trial, yet he has said publicly that he fully supports its continuation. One theory that explains Perez Molina's willingness to go along is his stated desire to restore full U.S. military aid to Guatemala, currently restricted due to human rights concerns. The U.S.'s FY 2012 Appropriations bill contains a proposal to reinstate the aid, but requires the Guatemalan government and military to fully cooperate with all human rights cases as a prerequisite.

Perez Molina's influence on the case and its ultimate outcome remain unclear. If the prosecution succeeds and Ríos Montt is brought to justice, it will be a hopeful step forward for Guatemala as it attempts to bring to justice those responsible for human rights abuses.

Bolivia: Update on TIPNIS controversy

The following is an update on the article "Bolivia: Highway plan stokes conflict," published in the November-December 2011 issue of NewsNotes.

Ceding to demands from indigenous communities in October 2011, the government of President Evo Morales stopped the construction of a highway through the Isiboro-Secure Indigenous Territory and National Park (TIPNIS in its Spanish acronym) and declared it an "untouchable" ecological reserve. The controversy is not over, however; the government, which hopes to re-start the highway's construction, has proposed an official consultation of affected indigenous communities as required by Bolivia's new constitution and international agreements.

The consultation will be limited to the Mojeño Trinitario, Chimán and Yuracaré peoples who live in 63 communities on the TIPNIS reserve. The votes will not be individually taken, but made collectively by each community according to their traditions. More recently arrived indigenous groups, mostly from the highlands, who have settled into a nearby area called Polygon 7 and are more supportive of the highway, will not be consulted.

As Emily Achtenberg of the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) writes, the consultation has sparked more controversy and confusion for a variety of reasons. "First, the TIPNIS consultation process will be anything but 'prior,' since the construction contract and funding agreement for the road [with Brazil's National Bank] have long been executed." It is also not clear how binding the result will be. Some legislators from Morales' own MAS party have implied that a result against the highway will not be binding and the government still retains the right to choose its course of action. "Finally, many say that the TIPNIS consultation process can't be carried out in 'good faith,' since the government responsible for implementing it is an interested party,



President Evo Morales speaks to a pro-government rally in La Paz.

Photo by Dario Kenner.

strongly advocating for the road."

An unofficial "pre-consulta" of 35 of the communities shows that 32 will vote against the road. Despite the clear indication of victory, CIDOB, the lowlands indigenous federation that represents many of the groups against the road, has called for another march to the capital that will likely be at the time of the vote, which must be held by early June (within 120 days of the promulgation of the law calling for the consultation.) They want the TIPNIS to remain untouchable and worry that the consultation is being used to undermine that law.

The sensible compromise promoted by Pablo Solon, Bolivia's former ambassador to the United Nations, is being overlooked by the government: Solon has called for a commission composed of representatives from indigenous communities, the governors of Beni and Cochabamba, and the national government, together with engineers and environmentalists, to study alternative routes for the highway, considering the potential economic, environmental and social impacts.

"Only on the basis of all these alternatives is it possible to then carry out a serious and responsible consultation," said Solon. Unfortunately, with the 120 day timeline, it is unlikely the studies will be carried out, and the situation will remain unresolved, with a possible solution pushed further into the future.

Honduras: Civil society decries mining law

Two and half years after a coup unseated President Manuel Zelaya, Honduras continues to struggle with increased human rights abuses, disenfranchisement, and environmental degradations. In late February, a coalition of more than a dozen organizations representing civil society, indigenous people and farmers, among others, met in Tegucigalpa to review the Honduran Congress' proposed law on mining and hydrocarbons. According to the Canadian group Mining Watch, this effort by Congress "takes place in the context of targeted threats and attacks on the security and well-being of activists and journalists in the country. [We are] concerned about the implications for further conflict in the country if a full and meaningful public process does not take place." The coalition's statement follows; the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns edited the English translation. The statement in Spanish can be found on the website of the Friendship Office of the Americas (www.friendshipamericas.org). More information can be found on Mining Watch's website, www.miningwatch.ca.

- We express our disagreement with the way in which more than 50 percent of the 104 articles of this proposed law have been elaborated, which, in addition to incorporating dispositions that are harmful to the Honduran people and the goods of the state, contradicts and ignores the minimum agreements that had been agreed upon with environmental organizations, affected communities, authorities of the state and representatives of mining companies.
- The proposed law is not ready to be debated by the National Congress, unless the desire of the Commis-

sion is to punish the communities, resulting in the loss of their historically acquired rights, especially the rights to food, water, health and life.

- In the name of the affected communities ..., we demand that the National Congress cease the process of approving this law and immediately initiate a citizen consultation process, particularly with affected populations.
- Our alliance has integrated legal and technical commissions that are available to immediately enter into debate with the Mining Commission of the National Congress in order to demonstrate the incoherence in the proposed law and the dangers that it implies for Honduran communities; in a similar way we propose changes that would be appropriate to the needs and interests of these populations.
- We have observed with much concern the strategic efforts of people associated with the mining companies within institutions of the state, which appears to us to have the explicit intention of facilitating the hand over of national territory to these companies to the detriment of the population.
- We declare that we are on alert and demand that the institutions of the state ... halt the handing over of national territory; from the National Congress we demand the immediate initiation of a consultation process, starting with the Honduran citizenry, to regulate a new mining law.

Signed by: Honduran Centre for the Promotion of Community Development (CEHPRODEC); Madre Tierra Association; Civic Alliance for Democracy (ACD); Fundambiente; Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (ASONOG); Institute for Environmental Law (IDAMHO); Regional Environmental Committee of the Siria Valley; Popol Nah Tun Foundation; Environmental Movement of Santa Barbara (MAS); National Network of Communities Affected and Potentially Affected by Open Pit Mining; National Roundtable on Risk Management; Agricultural Forum; and National Association for the Promotion of Ecological Agriculture (ANAFAE)

On January 24, hundreds of people marched against the proposed Mining and Hydrocarbons Law. The Honduran Mining Commission cited "enormous pressure from investors" as the rationale for moving the legislation ahead quickly. Photo by Greg McCain.



El Salvador: Update on Pacific Rim case

The following article was written by our colleague Sarah Anderson, who works at the Institute for Policy Studies, and was originally published on the Huffington Post in December. See related NewsNotes articles from September-October 2010 and March-April 2010.

The small country of El Salvador has dared to stand up against powerful international gold mining companies. And now they're dealing with the blowback.

One of the companies salivating over El Salvador's gold is suing the government for their failure to bow down and grant a permit for a proposed mining project. There is strong local resistance to the project because of concerns it could poison a river that is the source of water for more than half the national population.

The company, Pacific Rim, is demanding in excess of \$77 million in compensation, alleging violations of "investor protections" under the U.S. trade agreement with Central America.

If Pacific Rim wins, the government will face a stark choice: fork over a huge chunk of taxpayer dollars to a foreign corporation or put their people's health at risk.

But those fighting the case in El Salvador have an increasing number of influential allies in Washington, where the case is being heard at an international arbitration tribunal housed in the World Bank. On December 15, labor, environmental, faith, and other groups turned out for a rally to demand that the case be dismissed. They delivered a letter to World Bank and tribunal officials signed by more than 240 international organizations, including 14 U.S. labor unions.

Particularly notable among them was the United Mineworkers. Although their members' livelihoods depend on the mining industry, they expressed solidarity for those in El Salvador who are resisting this mining project because of the possible repercussions for public health and democracy.

El Salvador is still struggling to transition to representative democracy after years of civil war and there are lingering concerns about political violence. Tim Beaty, director of Global Strategies for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, spoke about his union's long history of solidarity with unions in El Salvador and said they are still seeking justice in the case of a Teamster organizer, Gilberto Soto, who was killed while he was working to make connections between U.S. and Salvadoran port workers in 2004. In the course of the dispute over Pacific Rim's proposed mining project, four Salvadoran anti-mining activists have been murdered.

The Pacific Rim case is just one example of a growing number of "investor-state" lawsuits over natural resources. An Institute for Policy Studies report, *Mining for Profits in International Tribunals*, finds that 43 of the 137 pending cases before the World Bank tribunal are related to oil, mining, or gas. By contrast, one year ago there were only 32 such cases and 10 years ago there were only three.

Not surprisingly, this increase has coincided with an increase in commodity prices. The price of gold, for example, has quadrupled, from \$282 per ounce in January 2000 to \$1,900 in September 2011. Corporations are using expensive lawsuits filed under trade rules as one more weapon to get their hands on these valuable resources.

A new video produced by the Democracy Center in Bolivia tells the broader story of how corporations are using these new powers to push back against all manner of government actions, including anti-smoking regulations in Uruguay, and the growing resistance in many developing countries. Even if Pacific Rim loses its case against El Salvador, the bigger struggle will continue to rewrite our trade rules so that governments don't have to face such outrageous cases in the first place.

Photo shows contamination at the Commerce Group San Sebastian gold mine
<http://watchblogaotearoa.blogspot.com>



South Sudan: Give government a fair chance

The following update is provided for NewsNotes by John Ashworth, who has worked as a missionary in the two Sudans since 1983. He is now an advisor to the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference and a peace facilitator for the Sudan Council of Churches; we deeply appreciate his analysis on Sudanese issues.

Several months after independence, the world's newest nation continues to develop, following an upward trajectory which began with the signing of a peace agreement in 2005. There is a functioning government; most people go about their business in relative security most of the time; communications have been revolutionised by mushrooming cellphone networks, domestic airlines and improved roads; banks are operating in most major towns; and there is a vibrant trade with Uganda and Kenya. There is an air of hope and optimism.

Of course none of this is happening as quickly as many would like. Delivery of basic services still tends to rely on the aid community. Development is concentrated on the capital, Juba, to the detriment of outlying areas. The transition from an armed liberation movement to a democratic government is a challenge, and the struggle against corruption and for good governance is ongoing. The development of a new constitution is proving controversial. Nevertheless, the Catholic bishops have advised people to manage their expectations and, while insisting on accountability and progress, to give the new government a fair chance. Rome was not built in a day.

There is still violence in certain parts of this huge country, which is perhaps not surprising given the trauma of decades of war and the wide availability of weapons. The government has proved weak in providing security for its citizens. The conflicts have different roots: inter-communal, disaffected militia leaders who have formed their own "rebel" groups, the international Lord's Resistance Army. While not a threat to the state, they cause death and suffering, and retard development. The hand of the former enemy, Khartoum, is suspected of fomenting much of this violence.

Disputes with South Sudan's northern neighbour and former master continue, particularly over borders and oil. South Sudanese oil has to pass through a pipeline in the Republic of Sudan for export, and Khartoum

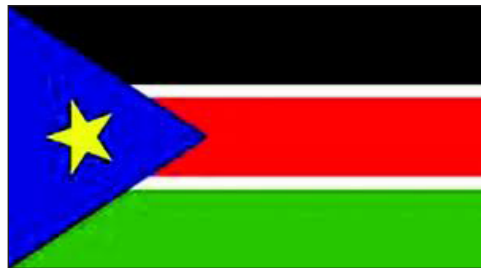
has allegedly been "stealing" it, while insisting on transit fees that are up to 30 times the international norm. The government in Juba has now shut down the oil wells and signed memoranda with Kenya and Ethiopia to build new pipelines. This has increased tension between the two former enemies, and will have economic implications for both. There are also concerns for the South Su-

danese who remain in Sudan, as they are likely to lose their Sudanese citizenship in April 2012.

Conflict also continues along the border between Sudan and South Sudan. The people of the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile, although part of Sudan, fought alongside South Sudan

during the long liberation struggle. They are now fighting Khartoum again in an effort to retain their identity in the face of government statements that there will be no room for ethnic nor cultural diversity and that Islamic *shari'a* will be strengthened. Khartoum has refused to negotiate, nor to allow humanitarian aid, and is seeking a military solution to these conflicts. With the ongoing war in Darfur, there are now three full-scale civil wars in Sudan. The enclave of Abyei, a Dinka area of South Sudan which was transferred to the north for administrative reasons in 1905, was due to have a referendum on whether it should remain in Sudan or join South Sudan, but this was blocked by Khartoum which then occupied the area militarily. Khartoum's forces have bombed refugee camps in South Sudan and its troops have crossed the border but were beaten back by South Sudanese armed forces.

The Catholic Church in the two nations has decided to remain a single bishops' conference, in recognition of its shared history and of the particular challenges which will face the Church in Sudan. However it will set up two secretariats, one in Juba and one in Khartoum. The Church occupies a unique position in South Sudan as it is the only institution which remained on the ground with the people throughout the war, providing basic services that one would normally expect from a government, and also providing leadership. It is also respected for its role in peace-making and advocacy. All of this was done on an ecumenical basis with other churches. The Church is determined to continue to play a public role, guiding the new nation in light of Catholic Social Teaching and Gospel values.



Kenya: Lent 2012, “Let light shine out of darkness”

The following piece, reporting on the ways the Catholic Church is preparing people for the next general election, was written by Fr. Joe Healey, MM, who lives and works in Nairobi.

“We want to remind ourselves that we have a duty to transform Kenya into a country where human dignity, human rights, equity, responsibility and equality are the core values. This is the basis of the teaching of the [Catholic] Church. To be the light of the world and the salt of the earth we must familiarize ourselves with the social teaching of the Church.” These challenging words of Archbishop Zaccarius Okoth, chair of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) in Kenya, are part of the preface of the booklet of the Kenya Lenten campaign that focuses on the 2012 national elections.

The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission was established in 1988 as an arm of the Kenya Catholic Bishops Conference. The annual Lenten Campaign is its best known program of justice and peace advocacy, peacebuilding and conflict resolution and transformative civic education. The overall theme for 2012 is *Towards a transformed Kenya: Let light shine out of darkness*.

Forty-five thousand copies in English and 15,000 copies in Swahili of the 40-page booklet have been distributed through Kenya. The themes of the five weeks of Lent are: Week 1 (“General elections: Our country, our leaders, our responsibility”); week 2 (“Food security”); week 3 (“Devolution”); week 4 (“Family”); and week 5 (“Peace and cohesion”). The booklet uses the process of the three steps of see, judge and act of the Pastoral Circle to reflect on concrete justice and peace issues in Kenya in relation to the Sunday Scripture Readings.

The campaign reaches the grassroots in Kenya through the over 40,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) that are mainly parish based and lectionary based. They meet in the middle of the week to read and reflect on the Gospel of the following Sunday. Highlights in the Lenten Campaign booklet are:

- Analyzing and discussing the cartoon on page 8. The left panel depicts an overweight politician in Kenya carrying a bag labeled “Our time to eat” with money sticking out. He is thinking to himself “Vote buying.



I’ll give them money and buy them alcohol.” The right panel shows a cross-section of people listening to a woman explaining her Party Manifesto. There is another drawing of a woman happily and freely voting.

- Reading the fictitious African story in Step One (“See”): “Another season is here for Songa Country” about good and bad politicians.
- Reading part of the situational analysis in Step Two (“Judge”). This includes a quotation from Pope Benedict XVI’s Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Africa’s Commitment (*Africae Munus*) and other documents on the social teaching of the Catholic Church.
- Reading the Gospel (Mark 1:12-15) and a scripture commentary. There is a clear parallel between the Devil tempting Jesus in the desert and politicians tempting Kenyan citizens to sell their votes.
- Answering the five questions in Step Three (“Act”) including: “How can you participate in the next general election as an individual/Small Christian Community/community? What is your role to ensure peaceful elections as an individual/Small Christian Community/community?”

Training sessions are being conducted throughout Kenya for Christians including SCC members on the process or methodology of Kenya Lenten Campaign 2012 booklet. Train the Trainers workshops are being facilitated in the parishes and schools using the important new resource, *Lent: Let light shine out of darkness -- Kenya Lenten Campaign Training Manual for Small Christian Communities*, published by the Catholic Kenyan bishops’ Justice and Peace Commission.

The exact date of the general election in Kenya has not been announced. It probably will be December 2012, but another possibility is March 2013. Through the active Kenya Lenten campaign and a widespread program of civic education, many Kenyans are getting better informed and will be ready to vote responsibly. To the post-election violence after the last general election in December 2007 Kenyan citizens are saying, “Never again.” Let us hope they are right.

For further information visit Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Kenya Episcopal Conference: <http://www.catholicchurch.or.ke>.

Middle East: Mis-education in the U.S.

The first part of the following article is an edited version of a letter to the editor by Maryknoll Fr. Doug May, originally written in 1992 while he was at the University of Notre Dame on renewal. It was written in response to a political cartoon published in the campus newspaper which depicted then Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir saying to then Secretary of State James Baker: "I suppose you're going to blame us for this growing Jewish settlement, too, Mr. Baker?" In the cartoon, the two are overlooking an Israeli cemetery with nine gravestones saying: "Stabbed to death by terrorist." "Blown up by terrorist bus bomb." "Murdered by terrorist gunmen." "Hacked to death by PLO terrorists." etc. Fr. May updated this piece in 2002, and now, 20 years after the original, updates it again.

After commending the paper's editor for a generally well-done daily campus publication, Fr. May writes, All went well until I hit page 7 with Shamir and Baker looking out over a Jewish cemetery. The gravestones implied that most of those buried were killed by "terrorists," presumably Arab. My initial feeling was one of shock followed by anger that I would see such a racist

cartoon in any paper let alone reprinted in yours. The next morning I looked at the drawing again and tried to make excuses for the paper and the responsible person saying to myself that ignorance of Middle Eastern history was to blame.

Apparently there are those who are still so misinformed that they are unable to realize what has been going on in Israel/Palestine for the last 44 [now 64] years and especially the last 25 [now 45]. Even though many students weren't even born at the time of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war [or the 1973 one], most students should at least have been in high school when the (first) Palestinian Uprising began in December of 1987 [or the second one 13 years later].

I asked myself, "Could anyone except a fanatical Jewish or Christian Zionist still be able to reduce the injustice and bloodshed in the Holy Land to terrorism by Arabs?" I reminded myself how I had rooted for Israel in the 1967 War and again in 1973 one and how I had worn a "Star of David" around my neck in 1971 to show my solidarity with Jews and Israel.

The first time I heard the name "Palestinian" or saw a man named "Arafat" on television was during the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich. Back then it was I who automatically thought that "Arab/Palestinian" equaled terrorist. "How could the Arabs pick on those poor, defenseless Jews who had suffered so much throughout the centuries, especially the current [past] one?" ...

Then in 1977, I went to live and work in the Middle East for the first time and met Arabs, some of whom were Palestinian. From that year, I listened to and read about Arab/Palestinian history and a large crack appeared in my pro-Israel/anti-Arab position. Over the last fifteen [now 35] years, I have lived and worked more than a decade [now 20 years] in the Middle East. Most of that time has been spent in Egypt and some in several

other countries including Israel and the West Bank where I spent the last several weeks of the [first] Gulf War.

Working with Palestinians in Egypt and visiting them in the West Bank have convinced me (along with many other foreign government and non-government organization workers as well as most mainline Christians, and even some Jews) that Israel represents an abused, victimized and oppressed people who have become the

empowered abuser, victimizer and oppressor of others, namely the Palestinians. I have met Palestinian youth beaten up and shot by the Israeli military. I have eaten with students whose homes have been blown up without any judicial proceeding and others who have only lived in refugee camps (along with their parents and grandparents for 64 and 45 years). I have sat with friends whose sons, brothers, fathers or husbands have been in administrative detention camps for months (and years) without trial. I have looked on as Israel has raped the Palestinians of their land, their water, their history and their future, but not their dignity nor their dream of a nation called Palestine.

Terrorism and terrorists can be found among Jews as well as Muslim and Christian Arabs. However, Israel cannot justify its dysfunctional behavior against the Arabs simply by recalling the Holocaust and Western anti-Semitism. Palestinians have a human and internationally recognized right to their land. I would say that most Palestinians see themselves as members of a "resistance movement" against an occupying colonial force. They



Photo by Ryan Rodrick Beiler,
www.ryanrodrickbeiler.com

have sometimes responded with violence, but Palestinian casualties far outnumber those of Israel.

I have seen the human face of the Palestinian and I have cast my lot with them while still hoping for a just and peaceful solution of the issues that would allow for Israel and Palestine to prosper together. The drawing which appeared [in the March 6, 1992 Notre Dame paper] shows that anti-Arab racism is still okay in America. It shows that pro-Israel propaganda still dominates ... It shows that many Americans are still ignorant of and/or indifferent to Middle East politics and history. [End of original letter to the editor.]

Did you know that the U.S. has vetoed almost every UN resolution condemning Israel and, one week before Sept. 11, 2001, walked out of the Durban Conference in protest of what seemed to be an upcoming resolution against racism in Israel? Did you know that the building of settlements which was supposed to be halted in 1992 – not only as a part of the Oslo Accords but also as a condition of a \$10 billion loan guarantee from President George H.W. Bush – continued unabated? In December 1993, I helped photograph the expansion of a Jewish settlement near Bethany three months AFTER the signing of the Oslo Accords.

Despite UN Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which call for Israel to return to its pre-1967 borders, and years of summits and attempted negotiations, the creation of a viable Palestinian state remains highly elusive; illegal settlements by Jewish communities on Palestinian land continue to be built, and generations of Palestinian refugees still are denied the right to return. As I and many others have been saying, the U.S. and Israeli idea of a Palestinian state is a scattering of Indian reservations selling cheap gas and cigarettes.

In response to my article 20 years ago, a Jewish student at Notre Dame told me that I should replace the cross around my neck with a swastika so that people could see me as the anti-Semitic moron I really was. Is it anti-Semitic or ignorant to want a secure land for Jews while also wanting justice for Palestinians? Wouldn't true Shalom/Salaam with justice be truly pro-Israel?

Suggested books: *Blood Brothers* by Elias Chacour; *Prophecy and Politics* by Grace Halsell; *The Question of Palestine* and other books by Edward Said; *The Papacy and the Middle East* by George Irani; *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* by Naim Ateek; *A Jewish Theology of Liberation* by Marc Ellis.

Rio+20: Civilization must ensure sustainability

On February 9, Henry de Cazotte, Special Executive Advisor for the Earth Summit, spoke to the representatives of numerous NGOs at the United Nations regarding preparations for the gathering, to be held in Rio de Janeiro this June. Before speaking, Cazotte, who is French, recognized that for most of the assembled group the main concerns in preparing for the Summit were ethics in the use of planetary resources and social justice. Addressing such a group appeared to inspire Cazotte to speak from the heart as well as from his depth of knowledge. Following are the main points raised in his eloquent remarks.

It is the hope of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon that the upcoming Rio+20 Conference will be the most significant summit yet. According to the Secretary General, humanity finds itself at a transformative juncture unparalleled in history. It was noteworthy that the Secretary General did not say that humanity finds itself at a crossroads but rather at a *transformative juncture*. In addition, Cazotte emphasized that, while we remember with pride the high level of achievement at the first Earth

Summit in June 1992, also held in Rio, the upcoming conference is not so much for looking back as for looking forward. The agreements to be made in 2012 must be designed to assure the well-being of humanity 20 years into the future, to 2032. This is noteworthy because many serious thinkers are raising doubts about humanity's survival beyond mid-21st century, based on the current rate of resource depletion and increasing population.

Given these considerations, in one short conference lasting only a few days, "what should be the main issues addressed and what goals can be offered to help humanity get its act together"?

The Summit needs to address two interlinked substantive issues. The first is **poverty alleviation**. The second responds to the question of **how not to cross various planetary thresholds?** The oceans are depleted, the climate is warming and there is unprecedented migration to the cities. With the projected population increase to nine billion people, it is predicted that global food production will have to increase by 45 percent. There is also a serious problem caused by the fact that the dilemmas facing humanity are global with long term consequences, while

the vision of governments is limited to national well-being for the immediate future.

These points would be too daunting to tackle except for the fact that a huge network of civil society is deeply engaged in preparations for the Summit. Ethical considerations are constantly brought forth, particularly by indigenous people whose voices were seldom heard in the past. In Europe, churches have a strong network advocating for planetary values and, in general, there is an expanding sense of human solidarity and concern for intergenerational well-being. Social media has made knowledge and information available and cast people around the world into a space of power unknown before the present.

However, on a different level, it must be asked if our global and multilateral institutions are adjusted to the challenges we face? Clearly, the answer is no; nevertheless, energizing suggestions are floated that indicate change for the better, keeping sustainability and responsibility to the future in focus: Some of these are:

- *Sustainable* development, built equitably on environmental, social and economic development, will become the flagship for the United Nations, providing the standard for all measures of progress. This is an important step beyond the present aim of development, which does not account for environmental depletion and is not bound by obligations to sustain and enhance the natural world for the sake of generations to come.
- The World Bank will completely change its tenor and become the Bank of Sustainable Development.
- A new metric for measuring well-being beyond the economic measure of GDP will be established. The question of how the global commons, the forests, the water and the air, are used must now be constant.
- The Trusteeship Council will become the Senate of the Planet.
- An undersecretary general position for Ombudsperson for Future Generations will be created.
- The UN Environment Program (UNEP), now a small branch of the UN system headquartered in Nairobi, will become the World Environment Organization. It is noted that there is a push for this by 110 countries.
- A registry of sustainability commitments that have global significance will be established and monitored by Civil Society.



Additionally, speaking of the broad Summit preparation on the part of stakeholders everywhere, one senses a reordering of principles in favor of the common good. Some even say the voice of the planet is being heard.

- The conversation around a low carbon global economy away from oil grows continuously. (Coal remains a huge problem.)
- Science is in continual dialogue with development. Silicon Valley is on the fast track for the design of “smart” homes.
- There is a growing effort universally to eliminate the use of all plastic bags and Styrofoam, as in Los Angeles County.
- In terms of solidarity, one hears the question - we share the air we breathe, why not the resources?
- A major battle is being waged against the commodification of the forests.
- In many places around the globe private money is being used – not linked to profit but to service.
- How humanity produces and consumes is being looked at. It is planned that the Catskills will provide vegetables for New York City. Lettuce will no longer be flown in from Chile.
- Sustainable agriculture is a central issue – less water and less fertilizer are called for.

Viewing these trends leads one to assess the current moment as transformative. True, there is much talk of the Green Economy and fear that it is really just another form of capitalism and greed. However, there is also a strong hope that the Green Economy will be the implementer of sustainability, respecting planetary boundaries and using planetary resources for the good of all humanity; that it will signify job creation as well as energy innovation and efficiency. In other words, a new industrial revolution.

Finally, the Summit is expected to produce Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will be for all nations and all people. This is unlike the Millennium Development Goals aimed at underdeveloped nations. The SDGs will probably center on sustainable cities, food security, water, energy, and disaster preparedness.

Hopefully real transformation is underway and the output of the Summit will be responsibly implemented. According to Cazotte, this is possible because every person on the planet with a mobile phone will be a potential monitor of implementation. Civil society, empowered by social media, will be the enforcing agent in the name of the future.

The financialization of nature

The 2008 food and energy price bubbles were only the latest in a series of crises for major investors who had become accustomed to the high returns of the 1980s and 1990s. In a desperate quest to find and create new markets with high profit potential, investors, with hundreds of trillions of dollars on hand, are quickly changing the “ownership” of nature and how land is used around the world. In countries where Maryknoll works, the result has been higher and more volatile food and energy prices, increasing conflicts over land, displacement of families and a notable shift away from local decision-making around land use. This “financialization” of nature is an overwhelming reality that will frame many struggles in coming years.

Antonio Tricarico, coordinator of the Italian organization Campaign for World Bank Reform, explains the concept well: “We live in a time of finance capitalism, when trading money...is more profitable [than] trading goods and services... That is in short what people refer to often as ‘financialization’ of the economy... as more and more aspects of everyday life – from home ownership to pensions and schooling – are mediated through financial markets rather than just markets.”

For more than three decades, international financial institutions have pressured governments to privatize the production and distribution of natural resources (mining, water delivery systems, energy utilities, etc.), but a more recent phenomenon is the growing encroachment of the financial sector in the ownership of the natural resources themselves.

Food and energy

The dot.com bubble in 2000 sent many stocks reeling and led many large investors (pension funds, hedge funds, endowments, sovereign wealth funds, etc.) to transfer large sums of money out of stocks into the real estate sector, creating a bubble that started to weaken in 2005.

In order to make up for losses in the housing market, investors pushed hundreds of billions of dollars into commodity markets, making long-term bets that the price of food and oil will increase in coming years. This massive influx of money led to the food and energy price bubbles of 2008. Remember \$4 gasoline and food riots around the world?

Until 1999, 60 to 80 percent of wheat markets were represented by “legitimate hedgers” (wheat farmers and

their buyers) with speculators comprising only 20-40 percent. With the addition of index funds (the tools that pension funds and other major investors use to speculate on commodity prices, very popular since 2005), speculators now outweigh legitimate hedgers, comprising 60 to 75 percent of the wheat market since 2006. Similar changes have occurred in other food and energy commodities.

With financial players now dominating these markets, world food and energy prices have become more heavily influenced by investment decisions rather than supply-and-demand fundamentals, resulting in higher charges and increased price volatility. Though arbitrary prices are bad for farmers and businesses, financial players can reap huge profits with high fluctuation.

While commodity markets have become the latest playground for large pools of money, Wall Street, with the aid of some governments, scientists and NGOs, is working to develop new markets to take advantage of impending shortages in a variety of natural resources.

Land-grabbing

Large institutional investors are increasingly buying farm land around the world as another good way “to balance their portfolio.” They know that in the long term, land prices will certainly go up due to increasing population, and have begun to buy large tracts of land, especially in Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe. Over 80 million hectares (200 million acres) of land – twice the size of France – has been leased or sold in developing countries since 2001 at extremely low prices, mostly to international investors.

Pastoralists and smallholder farmers who have been in areas for many generations are often exiled from their lands that now “belong” to distant pension funds and university endowments who prefer to plant massive palm oil plantations or other crops for export. Many of the projects claim to aid displaced families but this often does not play out on the ground.

Mining

Hedge funds increasingly fund mining projects and coal companies. This has made campaigns against specific mines and mining companies more challenging as information on hedge funds is limited and their actions are difficult to influence. Big banks and financial institutions are buying up large quantities of storage units for industrial metals like aluminum and copper as well as

gas and oil storage facilities. For example, Morgan Stanley chartered more oil tankers than Chevron in 2009, and Goldman Sachs is the largest owner of aluminum storage houses in the world.

Water

Currently there are only a few functioning water markets (some western U.S. states, Chile, South Africa and Australia have different trading schemes) with no real linkages between them, but Wall Street is working to change that. The chief economist of Citigroup recently stated, “I expect to see a globally integrated market for fresh water within 25 to 30 years. Once the spot markets are integrated, futures markets and other derivatives ... will follow. Water as an asset class will, in my view, become ... the single most important physical-commodity based asset class, dwarfing oil, copper, agricultural commodities and precious metals.”

Many national governments and international bodies see the pricing and selling of water on international markets as absolutely necessary. Different international forums are trying to agree on ways to place a monetary value on water in order to facilitate trade. Once water has a price it will be difficult, if not impossible, to avoid its eventual financialization.

“Carbon” and other virtual commodities

While growing speculation in physical commodities has had negative results, those markets are likely to be much more stable than newly-forming markets for carbon and other “virtual” commodity markets. In the case of carbon, there is no actual commodity to be bought and sold. As Tricarico puts it, “the commodity itself is a derivative – a bet on avoiding projected carbon emissions against a disputable baseline.” There are so many ways for the carbon market to be gamed that it is hard to imagine it not being highly vulnerable to price bubbles and crashes. As early experiences with the REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) market have shown, projects that displace thousands of families and plant massive “green deserts” of palm oil trees are considered to be positive and receive carbon credits to be sold on the market.

Unfortunately, carbon markets are only the first of many environment-centered markets that Wall Street would like to create. It is moving quickly to build markets to trade biodiversity and establish international frameworks to trade species, habitats and ecosystems.

Real-world results

We already see conflicts over land created by distant investors trying to balance their portfolios. If all of these new markets are formed and derivative trading allowed, bubbles and crashes like 2008 will become even more common and encompass even more aspects of life. These markets will increase demand for land which will drive global prices even higher. As financial players own more and more land, it will be Wall Street banks and pension funds making fundamental land-use decisions, further marginalizing the poor families who live on the land and depend on it for survival.

Advocacy points

The coming years will be crucial to build the consensus and legal and physical infrastructure for financially enclosing the commons. This quickly shifting panorama offers a host of places for civil society to intervene.

Overall, we must combat the meme that markets, especially financial ones, are the best way to allocate resources. The rich history of commons management needs to be held up as an equitable and sustainable way to manage resources. The fact that the 2009 Nobel Prize in economics went to Elinor Ostrom for her writings on strategies for managing commons is a good sign of the growing acceptance of commons management ideas.

We also must acknowledge that a constantly growing economy on a finite planet will always result in increasing shortages of resources. The global economy must shift toward a steady state economy which extracts resources and disposes of wastes at rates that Earth can accommodate. The sooner the better, as this will help decrease the demand for natural resources.

More specifically, organizations in the U.S. can work to make sure the financial reforms passed in the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010 are not watered down, or thrown out, in the implementation process. Strong reforms have been proposed, but the final implementation rules being currently defined are crucial. Three key areas are the Volker rule (restricting large institutions from participating in commodity markets), extraterritoriality (regulating international trades), and funding for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) that regulates commodity markets.

National governments, international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank, as well as international forums like the G20, European Union and UN

are also important places to act to stop the laws that turn nature into commodities and establish markets to trade them. For example, the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) study is a major initiative by the European Commission to price biodiversity and aid the creation of biodiversity markets.

Ample opportunities for North-South alliances

and campaigns exist around these issues; in fact, it will be important to include the perspectives from both hemispheres in all efforts to make sure that contradictory campaigns are not created. In the end, the biggest struggles will be on the ground as communities fight to preserve their livelihoods.

Trade: TransPacific Partnership raises concerns

More and more people of faith are committed to embracing their own power and obligation to create a human economy that fits within Earth's ecological boundaries while it serves human needs. One of the great responsibilities inherent in that commitment is to work actively toward returning corporations to their proper place in society. Corporate influence has changed the face of public policy, distracting lawmakers from working for the common good. In addition, multi-country trade agreements can put into place an economic regime built on de-regulation, offshoring, and an exchange of national sovereignty for the sake of corporate interests.

The U.S. Trade Representative's office has been hard at work crafting a free trade agreement (FTA) with countries whose borders lie along the Pacific Ocean. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), currently being discussed in Australia, proposes to bind together the U.S. and eight partners: Australia, Chile, Peru, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, New Zealand, and Vietnam. Talks on this agreement have been held in strict secrecy for years, beginning under the George W. Bush administration around 2002. Occasional leaks reveal discussions that do not bode well for common good-centered trade.

The plan is eventually to include every Pacific Rim nation. Mexico, Canada, the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan all share an interest in joining.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda has expressed his intention to participate, though this raises concerns among Japanese farmers who fear they will be devastated by the FTA. Japan faces an uncertain future as it attempts to rebuild after last year's earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis, to deal with an aging and declining population, and to define its role in the context of a rising China and a fast-changing Asia Pacific. People in Japan remain cautious with memories of the 1997 financial crisis that impacted much of southeast Asia.

The negotiations' secrecy has been a major issue. Civil society groups have had to rely on leaked texts

to learn the content of the discussions, and are raising concerns about a number of issues including intellectual property laws, lax financial sector safeguards, and foreign investor protections.

In terms of intellectual property, aspects of the TPP now being negotiated would alter current policy regarding affordable HIV and AIDS drugs. Civil society critics say that under the proposed agreement, intellectual property barriers would be expanded, enabling pharmaceutical companies to hold or renew patents for longer, which limits the availability of generic medicines and treatment. Around the globe, prices of medications to treat HIV and AIDS have fallen dramatically in the past 20 years largely due to intellectual property rules that allow for more widespread access to patents that were previously guarded by major money-making players like the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

Regarding foreign investor protections, tobacco has become an issue. Under the TPP tobacco manufacturing companies would be permitted to sue governments that impose rules on packaging, such as requiring warning labels on the health risks associated with using the product. This ability to sue would neutralize an aggressive labeling campaign in Australia which takes aim at reducing the number of teen smokers, and would make obsolete recent moves by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to make labels on tobacco packaging more explicit.

Negotiations continue until March 9 in Melbourne; the lack of transparency remains a critical topic. Without knowing what is in the text, it is impossible for the majority of people who will be impacted by the agreements to have a voice in how they are made.

Faith in action:

Write to President Obama and tell him to stop promoting trade agreements like the TPP that empower corporations and ignore the common good.

Arms Trade Treaty: Politicians sign declaration

In December 2006, 153 governments voted at the United Nations to start work on a global Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to regulate the trade and transfer of conventional weapons. Preparatory meetings have been held in July 2010, February and July 2011, and February 2012; the final negotiating conference will be held in July. The ATT has also been a point of discussion at UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security meetings, which are held annually in October. In the last few weeks, more than 125 Members of Parliament from around the world have signed the Control Arms Global Parliamentary Declaration on the Arms Trade Treaty; the signed declaration will be presented to participants at the July 2012 conference. It is promoted by Control Arms, a global civil society alliance campaigning for a strong ATT. Excerpts from the Parliamentary Declaration follow:

The international community stands at a crossroads in the negotiation of an Arms Trade Treaty. As democratically elected Members of Parliament worldwide, we strongly endorse and support this negotiation process, which must deliver a robust, legally binding instrument that effectively tackles the devastating consequences of armed violence and conflict around the globe.

We are concerned that the international trade in arms, when undertaken irresponsibly or diverted to illicit markets, contributes to armed conflict and armed violence. This often results in serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, internal and cross-border displacement, terrorism, organized and common crime, and the facilitation of the illicit trade in narcotics.

Moreover, it facilitates gender-based violence against women – who also disproportionately endure the indirect, longer-term consequences of armed violence. In turn, all these factors undermine peace and peace-building processes, human security, poverty reduction initiatives, and prospects for sustainable socio-economic development.

... At a minimum, the ATT should establish that no international transfer of arms and ammunition will be authorized if there is a substantial risk that the weapons

will be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law, or will seriously impair poverty reduction or socio-economic development.

We also recognize that for an ATT to have proper impact, its scope must be comprehensive and include all international transfers of conventional weapons, and in particular small arms and light weapons, but also all related ammunition and equipment used to deploy potentially lethal force in military and internal security operations.

As legislators from around the world, we are not only supporters of an effective ATT, we also have a major role and responsibility in making this Treaty a meaningful reality.

As advocates we can and will continue to actively engage with our colleagues in the executive branches of government to ensure they give the ATT the priority it deserves and remain informed of the concerns that must be properly addressed therein. We will also actively advocate for ratification of the ATT in our respective countries when the ATT is in place.

As lawmakers we will draft the legislation which will give effect to the ATT in our respective countries, and will seek to ensure that any such domestic laws faithfully reflects and integrates the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty.

As guardians of the peoples' trust we will ensure, through our oversight and accountability responsibilities, that our respective governments properly implement and enforce domestic law giving effect to the ATT. Legislation is only as good as its implementation.

We hereby call upon all of our fellow stakeholders worldwide in the negotiation of this Arms Trade Treaty to join us as we redouble our efforts, in the months ahead, to create a strong international agreement that will prevent irresponsible and illicit arms trading between countries. A robust ATT will greatly reduce the needless and massive loss of human life and livelihoods while at the same time not impeding the operation of the legitimate global arms trade as carried out with full respect for the rule of law and international standards.

Learn more about the efforts to enact the ATT on the Control Arms website, www.controlarms.org.



Resources

- 1) **Election 2012: Catholics vote for the common good:** This project, organized by NETWORK, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the Franciscan Action Network, the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and other Catholic groups, stems from momentum created during the 2008 election cycle. In 2012, the project's goal is to create common good platforms for each state and the District of Columbia, which will be signed and delivered to candidates and public officials. The common good is defined as "the total of all those conditions of social living – economic, political, sociological and cultural – which make it possible for women and men readily and fully to achieve the perfection of their humanity. Individual rights are always experienced within the context of the promotion of the common good." ("Catholic Social Teaching, our best kept secret," Orbis Books, 2004) Learn more at www.commongood2012.org.
- 2) **World Water Day:** The UN's World Water Day is **March 22**. An estimated two-thirds of the earth's surface is water. Yet more than one billion people (one in six of us) don't have access to clean drinking water. This kills more children annually than AIDS, malaria, and measles combined. Visit the multi-language site for World Water Day events here: <http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/>.
- 3) **"Is this the fast I seek?" Economy, livelihood and our national priorities:** The tenth annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice will be held at the Doubletree Crystal City near Washington, D.C. from **March 23-26**. Learn more at www.advocacydays.org.
- 4) **The Iran Primer:** This website brings together 50 experts—both Western and Iranian—to offer comprehensive but concise overviews of Iran's politics, economy, military, foreign policy, and nuclear program. Each link connects to a complete chapter on one of 62 subjects in 10 categories. Printable PDF attachments also are at the bottom of each chapter. New analysis is added weekly, based on recent developments in Iran. Provided by the U.S. Institute of Peace. <http://iranprimer.usip.org/>.
- 5) **Anti-trafficking resources:** The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) effort to combat human trafficking is called the Blue Campaign, organized around the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. Some resources available on the DHS website include the Human Trafficking "Coffee Break" Training PDF, which gives individuals a checklist of indicators to consider when faced with a possible trafficking situation, and a pamphlet entitled "Anti-Human Trafficking Resource for Worshipping Communities," for your organization's use in public outreach activities. Visit the DHS website to locate the resources: <http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/human-trafficking.shtm>; if you do not have access to the internet, contact the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and we'll mail you a copy.
- 6) **Africa Renewal:** This online resource, blog and magazine site, provides up-to-date information and analysis of the major economic and development challenges facing Africa today. It also produces public information materials, including backgrounders, press releases and feature articles. It works with the media in Africa and beyond to promote the work of the United Nations, Africa and the international community to bring peace and development to Africa. Visit <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/index.html>.
- 7) **The Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy (CASSE):** This project examines the negative side of an economy's striving for growth and expansion. A steady state economy is preferred since it is a sustainable alternative to perpetual economic growth. Visit <http://steadystate.org/>.
- 8) **Tackling urban violence in Latin America: Reversing exclusion through smart policing and social investment:** This report from the Washington Office on Latin America shares new strategies to reduce violence in Rio de Janeiro, Medellin, Ciudad Juarez and Santa Tecla. These include implementing new violence protection programs and community councils and more investment in social services. Visit http://www.wola.org/publications/tackling_urban_violence_in_latin_america_reversing_exclusion_through_smart_policing_and.